

### The London Mathematical Society.

A FEW months since it was announced in your columns that the Society had directed an index to the first thirty volumes of the *Proceedings*, and a complete list of members, to be drawn up by the secretaries. These have now been issued to members: the general public can have them from the publisher (F. Hodgson, 86 Farringdon Street) at the respective prices, 2s. 6d. and 6d. A free distribution of 1000 copies of the first part of the index, which comprises an arrangement of the papers in alphabetical order of authors' names, has been commenced, and upwards of 500 copies have been sent out. In the course of the existence of the Society some 440 persons have been recorded on the roll. This is not a great number, and some younger societies have shown greater vitality. Perhaps this issue may lead to the Society becoming more widely known.

R. TUCKER.

London Mathematical Society, July 23.

### The Consultative Committee and Technical Education.

THE Council of the Association of Technical Institutions has had under consideration the "Draft Order in Council" constituting the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education.

It welcomes the appointment of the Vice-President of the Association, Mr. Henry Hobhouse, M.P., as a member of the Consultative Committee, and as a representative of agricultural education and of technical education in rural districts. But it views with astonishment and regret the fact that technical education in the great towns of the United Kingdom is wholly unrepresented, although there are upon the Consultative Committee two representatives of elementary education in the persons of the Dean of Manchester and Mr. Ernest Gray, M.P., three heads of secondary schools, viz. Mrs. Bryant, Dr. Gow and the Hon. and Rev. Edward Lyttelton, as well as a large number of persons intimately acquainted with literary education.

It seems to the Council a matter of the greatest national importance that there should be upon the body which is to advise the Board of Education an adequate number of persons who are well acquainted with the applications of scientific knowledge to industries and commerce, and with the best methods of giving such technical training in this country as shall enable us to meet successfully foreign competition.

In view, therefore, of the very serious damage which may be done to technical education, and thereby to the trade and commerce of the country, if the Committee to which the Board of Education will look for advice is composed of persons without adequate knowledge of the matters to which I have referred, I venture to ask you to allow me, through your columns, to draw the attention of Members of Parliament, manufacturers, and merchants to this subject, in the hope that they may take steps to secure that the constitution of the Consultative Committee may be modified in such a way that due provision may be made for the presence of persons possessing special knowledge of trade, manufactures, and technical education.

Merchant Venturers' Technical  
College, Bristol, July 21.

J. WERTHEIMER.  
(Hon. Sec.)

### THE CENTENARY OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.

THE Royal College of Surgeons of England celebrates its centenary on July 25-27. The actual month of course in which George III. founded the College by Royal Charter was March, 1800, but in the spring of 1900 it would have been impossible adequately to marshal the forces of English surgery. Sir William MacCormac and Mr. Frederick Treves, to name no others, were, if we remember rightly, still in South Africa. The belated birthday of the College is to be fitly commemorated by a grand degree-giving, at which a number of representative European and American surgeons will receive the newly-created distinction of Hon. F.R.C.S. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales has already been presented with the diploma of Honorary Fellowship, a deputation from the College having waited on him on July 24. The form of words used in the Royal diploma is the same as that employed in all cases. "Know all men by these presents, that we, the Royal College of Surgeons of England, do hereby admit his Royal Highness Albert

Edward, Prince of Wales, an Honorary Fellow of the College."

Besides the degree-giving there will be a *conversazione*, a grand banquet, a Presidential address of welcome, which will deal at length with the history of the surgeon's art, and a reception at the Mansion House. But all such august ceremonial should be regarded neither as an end in itself, nor as specially typical of the progress of surgical education.

The centenary of the Royal College of Surgeons marks, in fact, not so much the hundred and first birthday of a noble institution as the audit-day of English surgery. It is as such that it should be regarded by all thoughtful men. How stands the surgical art of to-day in comparison to that of the opening years of the century? The question requires no long answer: it is not necessary to deal at length with the profound revolution, wrought since the days of Hunter, in surgery, whether intra-cranial, intra-thoracic, or abdominal. It suffices to mention only anæsthesia and antiseptics. In the year 1800 these two great agencies for good were unknown—the surgeon had to arm himself for his task after the manner of a skilled slaughterer, and Death, as often as not, stalked at his elbow through the hospital wards or to the rich man's bedside.

At the beginning of the century, too, science was everywhere in its infancy. The surgeons, though they had ceased to rank with manicurists and barbers, were often little better than bone-setters. They dreaded operations—considered them a confession of weakness, and this through a general ignorance of how safely to operate. Medical etiquette, in those old days, was an affair of various interpretation: quackery preyed unrepented on the general ignorance. To-day surgery has become, as far as may be, scientific. The modern medical man is trained as a man of science; he is in England also subject to perhaps the severest code of honour known to history. The scientific spirit has so far permeated the public mind that even modern quackery is compelled to pose in the garb of research based on the inductive method. Graham, Buzaglo, and the inventor of the "metallic tractors" appealed in the year 1800 to just such confused instincts as possess the affrighted victims of the savage medicine-men described by Messrs. Spencer and Gillen. To-day the clever impostor takes in vain the sacred name of science, or if he make his appeal to the religious instinct, he is careful to do so almost as philosophically as a Brahmin or a Buddhist.

The progress of social relations is spoken of by jurists as one from status to contract; the progress of the medical sciences might as fitly be described as from fetich to reason.

In this progress the Royal College of Surgeons has been no unimportant factor. The very conservatism of that great society has been a source of strength. In countries where leading institutions are less tenacious of privilege, less rigidly decorous, the interests they protect tend incessantly to degenerate for lack of ideals, of ethics, and of breeding. The names of countries, especially young ones, will occur to the philosophic, where the medical profession suffers continuously from the un-academic spirit of its academies. Yet there can be no doubt that the conservatism of the College was at one time excessive.

This will be at once apparent to the readers of Sir William MacCormac's centennial address on the "History of Surgery and Surgeons." As a succedaneum to his text, sixty-one carefully prepared biographies of his predecessors in office have been published. Of these presidents certain of the earlier ones constitute an object-lesson in oligarchy and the art and craft of office-holding. Charles Hawkins, first Master of the College in 1800, had for years—since 1790—been Master of the